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REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-6, and 8-21 remain pending in the application with claims 1 and 6 amended and claims 4 and 7 cancelled herein. No new matter has been added.

Claims 12, 4, 6, 7, and 12-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,111,876 to Frantz. In addition, claims 3, 5, 8-11, and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Frantz in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,650,639 to Doherty. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

The office action alleges that Frantz discloses a LAN switching method of claim 1 comprising a first step of establishing a plurality of VLAN's different from each other for a single group composed of a plurality of members, and a second step of mapping frames from the members to a predetermined VLAN selected from among the VLAN's.

However, it is respectfully submitted that Frantz fails to teach or suggest that each of the plurality of VLAN groups or a single VLAN group is established with a plurality of VLAN's as claimed in claims 1 and 6 and shown in Figs. 2-4. In the frame format shown in Fig. 5 of Frantz no VLAN's are mapped among a single VLAN group, namely that Frantz fails to disclose or suggest a technical idea of VLAN group itself.

Accordingly, it is submitted that independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the relied upon portions of Frantz and is allowable. For similar or somewhat similar reasons it is submitted that independent claim 6 is also allowable and patentably distinguishes over Frantz.

Claims 2, 6, 12-20 depend from one of these allowable base claims and patentably distinguish over Frantz for at least the same reasons. Further it is submitted that Frantz fails to teach the features of claims 2 and 12 of mapping a received frame to the group to which a source member of the frame belongs.

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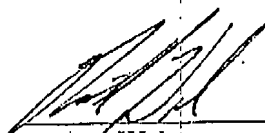
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Finally with respect to the rejections of claims 3, 5, 8-11, and 21, it is submitted that Doherty also fails to disclose or suggest a technical idea of VLAN group as discussed above. Accordingly, dependent claims 3, 5, 8-11, and 21 are believed to be patentable over Frantz whether considered alone or in combination with Doherty.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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